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## **Ambassador discusses anti-corruption in Salah ad-Din**

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**TIKRIT, Iraq** – U.S. Department of State anti-corruption coordinator, Ambassador Joseph Stafford, toured Salah ad-Din province to assess anti-corruption efforts at the provincial and local level, April 24-26.

For three days, the ambassador met with local government leaders, non-governmental organizations, judicial officials and business leaders to discuss ways to stop the abuse and misuse of power and eliminate corruption in the province where Contingency Operating Base Speicher is located.

According to Stafford, the purpose of his visit was to show the citizens of Salah ad-Din that the United States is working with the Government of Iraq to raise awareness of corruption and find solutions to build integrity and transparency within Iraqi organizations, both private and governmental. This included informing leaders of the new Iraqi National Strategy for fighting corruption, which was issued earlier this month.

“We are dedicated to helping the Iraqi government and people with their efforts in building an Iraq, and I’m honored for the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas,” said Stafford.

Stafford's visit culminated with a visit to the Tikrit Provincial Council building, where he was able to meet with several provincial council members. During this meeting, numerous problems were identified, potential solutions were discussed, and progress was noted.

According to Stafford, in 2008, Iraq was the second most corrupt nation, moving down to the fourth in 2009.

"This might not be at a good level yet, but it definitely shows improvement," he said. He added that the majority of court cases regarding corruption resulting in sentencing improved from 97 of 350 cases in 2008 to 300 of 900 cases, showing movement in a positive direction.

"It will be impossible to get rid of (corruption) one hundred percent, but we can eliminate certain areas of it. In the end, it's a temporary situation. We need to work on empowering (Iraqi) law because there are weak points in (it)," he said. "In the end, it's a financial issue. It is important for officials to be dedicated in fighting corruption and those who are corrupt. Step by step, the government and the people will cooperate in fighting corruption."

Provincial Council member Fatin Abdul Qader, who also runs an orphanage and day care center in Tikrit, acknowledged that anti-corruption efforts will take time.

"Even if we can't solve corruption for our generation, hopefully we can solve it for generations to come," she said.



TIKRIT, Iraq – U.S. Department of State anti-corruption coordinator, Ambassador Joseph Stafford discusses anti-corruption efforts at the Tikrit Provincial Council building, April 26. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Rebecca Walsh, 4IBCT PAO)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT THE UNITED STATES DIVISION – NORTH PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE AT [usdnpao@3id.army.mil](mailto:usdnpao@3id.army.mil) OR DSN 318-856-0218

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